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Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Assistance to Madagascar following the tropical cyclones

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. Madagascar was struck by tropical cyclone Eline, which crossed the island from the east-central to the south-western region, and tropical storm Gloria, which made landfall on the north-eastern coast of the island; both disasters occurred within a three-week period in February 2000. These two disturbances affected 34 districts of the west-central, central, north-eastern and south-eastern regions of Madagascar, causing the death of 222 people and leaving 184,831 persons in need of immediate humanitarian assistance and 22,985 people homeless.

2. Four weeks later, in March, the very severe tropical cyclone Hudah (with winds gusting up to more than 300 km/h) made landfall on the north-eastern coast (the town of Antalaha) and left by the north-west. It struck with rare intensity the districts of Antalaha, Maroantsetra and Andapa, which had already been battered by tropical storm Gloria.

3. These natural disasters crossed the island with strong winds, torrential flood-producing rains and landslides. The successive onslaught of these three cataclysms caused significant material damage to the agricultural, health, educational and public infrastructures, as well as loss of human life.

4. The three cataclysms combined caused 222 deaths, affected 1,106,208 people (including 221,242 children under five years of age and 12,445 pregnant women) and left 295,613 persons in need of immediate assistance (including 59,123 children under five years of age and 3,326 pregnant women).

5. In-depth sectoral evaluations are being carried out in order to assess the damage caused by the three natural disasters, which will significantly diminish prospects for economic development and have a negative impact on the nutritional status of the affected regions, particularly in the east-central and north-eastern regions. Other central regions and western and south-eastern regions were also affected, but the economic and social consequences in those regions are less severe than in the more vulnerable north-eastern and east-central regions.

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II. Impact of the three disasters

Impact on economic conditions and food security in the affected areas

6. Severe flooding and landslides have damaged large areas of rice paddies and will have an adverse effect on the agricultural year in most of the affected regions and on future harvests of rice, a staple food in these regions. The rehabilitation of agricultural water systems will be a long-term task.

7. Moreover, the disasters have had devastating effects on cash crops (vanilla, cloves), and the impact on the cash income of households in the affected regions and for the national economy will be felt in a few months (higher food prices, decreased exports and insufficient cash income for the population).

8. Food shortages will have serious consequences for the nutritional status of the population, particularly of the categories at risk. At the same time, there will be an explosion in food prices and a shortfall in income from food.

9. The destruction of communications infrastructures by landslides and heavy flooding (impassable roads, washed-out bridges, silted rice paddies) negatively affect development conditions in isolated regions, which are experiencing serious economic difficulties.

Impact on availability of basic social services

10. Several health units have been destroyed and will no longer be operational unless an emergency rehabilitation programme is rapidly put in place to ensure minimum services and combat diseases (recurrence of diarrhoeal diseases, malaria, measles, acute respiratory infections) and malnutrition which are exacerbated by the isolation of certain areas and the unavailability of immediate medical assistance (destruction of stocks of drugs) and the pollution of water sources (wells, surface water and unsafe and affected rivers). In the north-east, at least 86 per cent of the health units are no longer operational. The state of health of the most vulnerable sectors of the population (children, the elderly, pregnant women, displaced populations) is extremely precarious.

11. Many school buildings have also been destroyed and thousands of schoolchildren are facing the real risk of not being able to complete the school year, since the resumption of classes is in doubt. In the districts of Andapa, Antalaha and Maroantsetra, school buildings have been seriously damaged. For example, at Maroantsetra, only seven out of 124 schools are still operational. Pending the rehabilitation of school buildings, an emergency system to enable teaching to be resumed through the provision of teaching materials and the use of tents as provisional buildings is currently in operation.

12. With respect to public buildings that have been destroyed, a long-term emergency rehabilitation programme will be required in order to restore efficiently operating services.

Structural constraints and difficulties facing intervention in the affected regions

13. The two most seriously affected regions are in isolated areas and are not accessible from the capital, Antananarivo. In the north-east, only 28 per cent of the *fokontany* (villages) surveyed are accessible by road, 46 per cent are accessible only by helicopter, 3 per cent by aircraft and 42 per cent by boat or canoe except where the coasts are blocked by trees (as in the case of the port of Antalaha). Furthermore, the main difficulty currently facing the badly affected north-east region is lack of access by road and the need to deploy aircraft on a large scale to reach the intervention areas, and the lack of telephone communications, particularly in Maroantsetra. In the east-central region, the districts of Marolambo and Antanambao-Manampotsy have so far been accessible only by air. Such geographical conditions make the logistics of intervention very difficult and costly.

III. Response by agencies of the United Nations system, the Government and donors

(a) Response by United Nations agencies

14. The response by United Nations agencies is in keeping with the measures taken each time there is a cyclone. The United Nations system has played a catalytic role in the coordination and mobilization of responses to requests for emergency assistance, both within and outside the United Nations system.

15. A working group of the United Nations system (the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),

the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) headed by the Resident Coordinator has drawn up a three-prong intervention strategy: immediate emergency response to assist victims, a short-term response and a joint mechanism for responding to emergencies in general.

Immediate response strategy

16. In order to harmonize emergency interventions (food and non-food assistance, water purification equipment, medical kits), the concept of "one single logistical support" has consistently underpinned such activities owing to the logistical constraints prevailing in isolated and disaster-stricken regions. Logistical resources have accordingly been concentrated and placed under the management of WFP in order to meet both the logistical needs of United Nations agencies and also those of other partners (Médecins sans frontières, CARE, the Red Cross and others).

17. After cyclone Hudah struck, and in view of the scale of requirements and the remoteness of the disaster-stricken areas, two operational intervention and coordination centres were set up to facilitate and expedite emergency measures in the north-east zone (United Nations operational and logistics centres, one based in Antalaha and the other in Maroantsetra). Each centre is coordinated on the basis of the "lead agency" concept. In Antalaha, the Resident Coordinator designated WFP as the lead agency for United Nations interventions while in Maroantsetra that role is played by UNICEF in coordination with the other partners in the sector and the Government (the National Relief Council (CNS), regional relief bodies and local authorities).

18. In this emergency phase, overall coordination remains under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, who prepared the flash appeal from United Nations agencies following cyclone Hudah. The flash appeal, totalling US$ 15,794,339, was disseminated through the information channel of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with a view to mobilizing resources.

19. Even before cyclone Hudah, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had already sent a member of its natural disaster response service, following the damage caused by Eline and Gloria, in order to assist the Resident Coordinator in his efforts to mobilize international assistance, and seven situation reports on the disaster were prepared and distributed.

20. In view of the tremendous impact of cyclone Hudah, a team of three members of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, including an information specialist, was sent to Tananarivo and to the Antalaha region. Their functions were to assist the office of the Resident Coordinator by collecting information on the impact of the cyclone and to mobilize resources through the preparation of an emergency flash appeal to the international community. Through its information network, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs distributed five situation reports. The Office's Military and Civil Defence Unit launched an appeal to its partners to mobilize resources for the transport by air of assistance to regions that were otherwise inaccessible.

21. By way of immediate response, each agency took action in accordance with its mandate:

(a) WFP:

(i) Emergency food aid totalling about US$ 200,000;

(ii) Special operations (logistics) totalling US$ 1,200,000;

(iii) Emergency operations in the form of vector control technology (VCT) totalling US$ 2,932,487;

(b) UNICEF: Emergency assistance (medical kits, high-protein biscuits, water purification, blankets and so forth) totalling in all some US$ 3,000,000;

(c) UNFPA: Provision of emergency reproductive health kits and support for the in-depth evaluation of reproductive health needs and requirements for the rehabilitation/reconstruction of health units in the north-east zone (Antalaha, Sambava) to an overall total of US$ 70,000;

(d) WHO: Evaluation of the state of preparedness of health services to deal with post-cyclone epidemics by WHO/West Africa (AFRO) team using the expertise of a sanitary engineer and an epidemiologist in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, and emergency assistance (medical kits and drugs totalling US$ 97,000);

(e) ILO: Support for the Government in evaluating damage in the south-eastern and east-central zones;

(f) FAO:

(i) Evaluation of damage to the agricultural sector and identification of emergency agricultural needs as well as the provision of seeds (120 tons of rice seed, 90 tons of bean seeds and 400 kilograms of vegetable seed) and small items of equipment (spades, shovels, wheelbarrows);

(ii) For the rice-growing region of lake Alaotra, which experienced a period of drought, the provision of 150 tons of rice seed through a technical cooperation project totalling US$ 127,500;

(g) UNDP/ERD (Emergency Response Division):

(i) Financial support for the conduct of initial in-depth evaluations and support for the operations of CNS in the interest of better coordination — US$ 150,000;

(ii) Logistical support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs totalling US$ 98,500.

Short-term strategic responses

22. In addition to specific assistance measures, the United Nations has also supported the in-depth evaluation phase and assisted the National Relief Council through the strengthening of its emergency response capacity. To that end, the Resident Coordinator has mobilized all the technical and human resources available within the United Nations system to support the damage-assessment phase in the health, water and sanitation, education, nutrition and agriculture sectors, as well as the process of drafting a strategic document on a medium-term response during the rehabilitation phase.

23. A joint WFP/FAO mission backed by the Government (Ministry of Agriculture) was undertaken from 25 April to 12 May 2000 in order to evaluate the crop year and food balance-sheet following the various climatic phenomena (floods, drought, cyclones) that have struck the country. The recommendations of that mission will be incorporated into the implementation of the short- and medium-term responses.

Medium- and long-term strategic responses

Medium-term

24. The United Nations is also involved in the medium-term response (3 to 12 months). This includes assistance to the Government in the formulation of a medium-term rehabilitation plan for the affected areas through the compilation and analysis of in-depth sectoral studies.

25. The United Nations agencies support the definition of a framework for medium-term action based on technical commissions established in cooperation with the Government: health/water and sanitation; agriculture/food security; productive infrastructures and communications; logistics.

Long-term

26. The long-term support mechanism is based on institutional support provided by UNDP with a view to preparing national institutions to deal with emergency situations arising from natural disasters. Such assistance should lead to the formulation of a national strategy for the prevention and management of natural disasters and risks, and the definition of a sustainable institutional management framework.

27. In this context, UNDP has made available to CNS five national consultants and an international consultant responsible for guiding the process.

28. Following the emergency assistance phase, the two operational coordination centres based in Antalaha and Maroantsetra will be able to be mobilized at short notice in the other areas and used for preventive action in preparation for the 2001 cyclone season.

(b) Government response

29. The Government launched two appeals (9 March and 7 April) for international solidarity to respond to the emergencies caused by the three natural disasters. Based on in-depth evaluation carried out by CNS, the first appeal generated US$ 3.5 million and the second, US$ 15,608,121. The United Nations flash appeal is based on the appeal launched by the Government following cyclone Hudah.

30. Owing to the geographical distances between the affected areas, the extent of the material damage and human casualties and communication difficulties, the

three cyclones have greatly hampered the Government's efforts to respond to the disasters.

31. During the critical emergency phase, the Government relied on CNS, which has cooperated actively with the regional relief bodies to speed up emergency relief operations and coordinate the flow of aid and the work of the technical teams.

32. The army has also been involved in facilitating emergency relief efforts and has provided valuable support to CNS and the regional relief bodies. Nevertheless, the human and technical input provided by the Government has not constituted an effective response to emergency needs owing to logistical difficulties and inadequate resources for responding to such a critical situation.

33. The reconstruction phase has begun, and the National Council for the Coordination of Cyclone Damage (CNC)) has taken over from the National Relief Council. CNC acts as an intermediary between the Government and the donors participating in the reconstruction effort.

34. The mission to assess the cyclone damage, which was undertaken in May, has been completed. The estimated cost of the reconstruction programme and emergency response is US$ 102 million, and the Government's needs for budgetary financing are expected to amount to US$ 51 million.

(c) Response of the financial and technical partners

35. The financial partners (bilateral and multilateral agencies, embassies) and technical partners (non-governmental and international organizations) have been involved from the outset through consultations and exchanges spearheaded by the *Comité restreint d'intervention en cas de catastophes* (CRIC). This forum for consultations has throughout the crisis phase played a very important role in coordinating relief measures and aid flows from the various partners in their efforts to respond rapidly to meet assistance needs.

36. The international community responded very rapidly during the emergency assistance phase, when agencies of the United Nations system made a substantial contribution to the greater coherence of relief efforts.

37. The financial partners have relied heavily on the data collected by the CRIC (joint aerial inspections, daily CNS/CRIC coordination meetings) to plan their emergency assistance, and have channelled their financing directly to the work carried out by United Nations agencies (WFP, UNICEF) in order to facilitate aid flows:

(a) Through WFP:

(i) United States Agency for International Development (UNAID): financing of three helicopters through WFP;

(ii) Canada: resources for logistical support;

(iii) United Kingdom: resources for logistical support;

(iv) Switzerland: provision of a logistics specialist and, if necessary, funds for the purchase of food;

(b) Through UNICEF:

(i) United Kingdom: non-food donations;

(ii) Norway: non-food donations, medical kits;

(c) Through WHO:

(i) Italy: US$ 150,000 donation for the rehabilitation of health infrastructure;

(ii) Botswana: emergency aid amounting to US$ 3,000 (Lactate Ringer + oral rehydration salts).

38. Some donors (France, Germany, United States of America, the European Union) have chosen to provide direct support or support through technical and specialized partners (CARE International, Médecins sans frontières, regional relief bodies).

39. With regard to medium-term damage-rehabilitation efforts, the Government, donors and technical partners have jointly participated in a broad assessment of damages and rehabilitation needs. The Government will submit this document to donors with a view to obtaining financial support. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has agreed in principle to provide special resources financing in the amount of US$ 24 million. The Paris Club is currently considering a request for the postponement of the US$ 14 million debt and will reach a decision on the matter by the end of December 2000.

IV. Prospects for rapid and durable reconstruction

40. The reconstruction phase is coordinated by CNC. The analysis and interpretation of the studies carried out by the sectoral commissions (agriculture, health, water and sanitation, infrastructures, transport) resulted in the assessment of damages and an evaluation of the rehabilitation needs in each sector concerned.

41. In the agricultural sector, an initial FAO mission (April 2000) made it possible to carry out a rapid assessment of damages and to plan short- and medium-term emergency measures through a US$ 400,000 Tropical Cyclone Programme (TCP) project. That was followed by a more complex FAO/WFP mission, which evaluated losses in the agricultural production of subsistence crops and export crops, particularly vanilla and cloves, and the food deficit caused by the cataclysms. The purpose of this mission is to help the Government to determine food shortages, requirements in the form of food aid and imports to overcome the shortages and the need for seeds to save the agricultural year currently in progress.

42. This mission included in its evaluation disasters (particularly drought and hail) other than the cyclone. The mission stressed the serious economic impact of the combination of three cyclones and drought (southern and east-central regions) on prospects for rice production (region of lake Alaotra) and the nutrition gap of the affected populations that would occur. The drought in the country's southern regions also calls for urgent measures in the area of stockpiling, nutritional follow-up and strengthening food-security systems in addition to the short-term rehabilitation needs of the zones affected by the cyclones.

43. At the same time, the World Bank has undertaken an assessment of the damage to the infrastructures (agricultural, sanitation, educational and administrative), employing the same methodology that was used in the case of Mozambique. This exercise includes the work of the sectoral commissions that have been involved since the beginning and will result in the preparation of a document on assistance for the rehabilitation of the cyclone damage and support for the balance of payments, which should be finalized by the end of May. The results of these two missions shall have to be collated.

44. The support of UNDP/ERD for the preparation of the medium-term rehabilitation plan is an integral part of this process.

45. All these missions are carried out with a view to giving the Government and the international community the information they need to take decisions concerning the emergency measures to be carried out. Such information is of vital importance to the financial partners, who rely on the results of the whole evaluation process, which should result in the formulation of a single plan for financing the rehabilitation needs of the infrastructures in the most affected sectors, such as agriculture, transport, education and health.